Prepositions

SEMESTRAL UNI - 2023 II

Preposition Basics

A preposition is a word or group of words used before a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase to show direction, time, place, location, spatial relationships, or to introduce an object. Some examples of prepositions are words like "in," "at," "on," "of," and "to."

Prepositions in English are highly idiomatic. Although there are some rules for usage, much preposition usage is dictated by fixed expressions. In these cases, it is best to memorize the phrase instead of the individual preposition.

A Few Rules

Prepositions of Direction

To refer to a direction, use the prepositions "to," "in," "into," "on," and "onto."

- She drove ***to*** the store.
- Don't ring the doorbell. Come right ***in (to)*** the house.
- Drive **on *(to)*** the grass and park the car there.

Prepositions of Time

To refer to one point in time, use the prepositions "in," "at," and "on."

Use "in" with parts of the day (not specific times), months, years, and seasons.

- He reads ***in*** the evening.
- The weather is cold ***in*** December.
- She was born ***in*** 1996.
- We rake leaves ***in*** the fall.

Use "at" with the time of day. Also use "at" with noon, night, and midnight.

- I go to work ***at*** 8:00.
- He eats lunch ***at*** noon.
- She often goes for a walk ***at*** night.
- They go to bed ***at*** midnight.

Use "on" with days.

- I work ***on*** Saturdays.
- He does laundry ***on*** Wednesdays.

To refer to extended time, use the prepositions "since," "for," "by," "during," "from…to," "from…until," "with," and "within."

- I have lived in Minneapolis ***since*** 2005. (I moved there in 2005 and still live there.)
- He will be in Toronto ***for*** 3 weeks. (He will spend 3 weeks in Toronto.)

- She will finish her homework ***by*** 6:00. (She will finish her homework sometime between now and 6:00.)
- He works part time ***during*** the summer. (For the period of time throughout the summer.)
- I will collect data ***from*** January ***to*** June. (Starting in January and ending in June.)
- They are in school ***from*** August ***until*** May. (Starting in August and ending in May.)
- She will graduate ***within*** 2 years. (Not longer than 2 years.)

Prepositions of Place

To refer to a place, use the prepositions "in" (the point itself), "at" (the general vicinity), "on" (the surface), and "inside" (something contained).

- They will meet ***in*** the lunchroom.
- She was waiting ***at*** the corner.
- He left his phone ***on*** the bed.
- Place the pen ***inside*** the drawer.

To refer to an object higher than a point, use the prepositions "over" and "above." To refer to an object lower than a point, use the prepositions "below," "beneath," "under," and "underneath."

- The bird flew ***over*** the house.
- The plates were on the shelf ***above*** the cups.
- Basements are dug ***below*** ground.
- There is hard wood ***beneath*** the carpet.
- The squirrel hid the nuts ***under*** a pile of leaves.
- The cat is hiding ***underneath*** the box.

To refer to an object close to a point, use the prepositions "by," "near," "next to," "between," "among," and "opposite."

- The gas station is ***by*** the grocery store.
- The park is ***near*** her house.
- Park your bike ***next*** to the garage.
- There is a deer ***between*** the two trees.
- There is a purple flower ***among*** the weeds.
- The garage is ***opposite*** the house.

Prepositions of Location

To refer to a location, use the prepositions "in" (an area or volume), "at" (a point), and "on" (a surface).

- They live ***in*** the country. (an area)
- She will find him ***at*** the library. (a point)
- There is a lot of dirt ***on*** the window. (a surface)

Prepositions of Spatial Relationships

To refer to a spatial relationship, use the prepositions "above," "across," "against," "ahead of," "along," "among," "around," "behind," "below,"
"beneath," "beside," "between," "from," "in front of," "inside," "near," "off," "out of," "through," "toward," "under," and "within."

- The post office is ***across*** the street from the grocery store.
- We will stop at many attractions ***along*** the way.

- The kids are hiding ***behind*** the tree.
- His shirt is ***off***.
- Walk ***toward*** the garage and then turn left.
- Place a check mark ***within*** the box.

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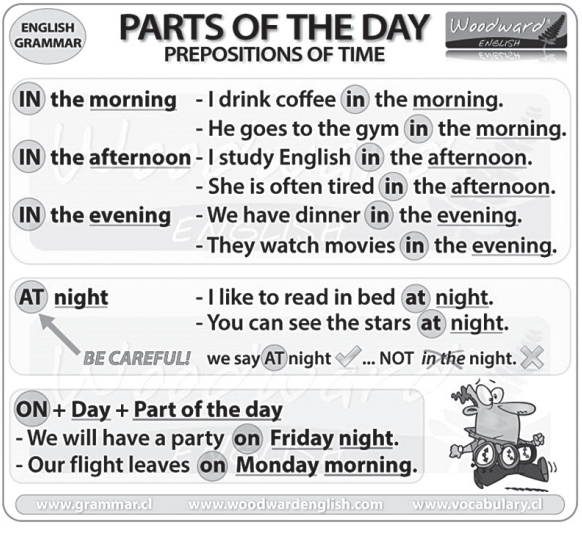
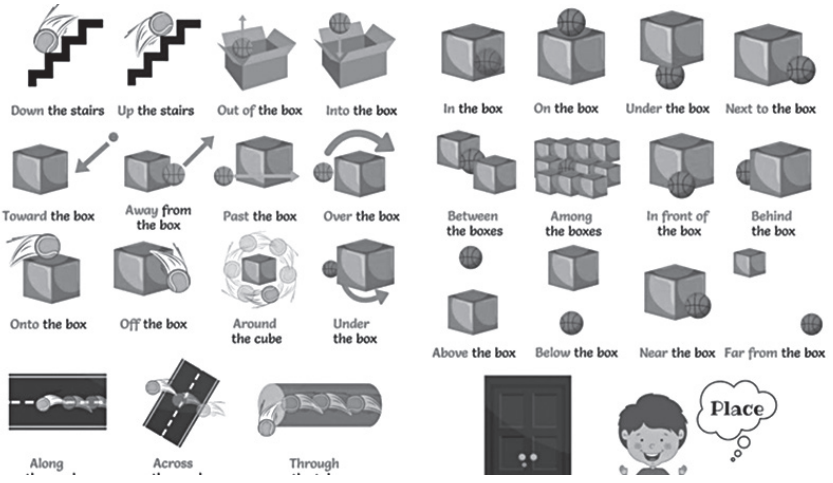


Prepositions of place and movement



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